2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

824 manufacturing baskets, sieves and mats; and still another 25 in the hunting activities of boys (arrows, bows, traps, glue.) Over 100 are known more particularly for their edible fruits or roots and 45 are greens or relishes; 250 are well-known in the everyday medical pharmacopoeia, and of these 60 are magical. Among other well-known uses are those of the grasses and sedges (15) from which dancing or initiation costumes are made and those (12) connected with games. Some 5 were considered noxious weeds and 8 had certain taboos attached to them. Plants with conspicuous flowers are not specially observed, and one asks the ordinary man in vain as to the name and uses of the more delicate flowering plants; on the whole, he is far better acquainted with trees than with shrubs and grasses, unless used as relishes.

824 789 What is striking is that the ordinary man regards the flora from a most practical point of view. Only a small proportion of the well-known plants have uses which are mainly magical, and knowledge based upon empirical observation overshadows that derived from mystical conceptions. One does not 'doctor' wood to strengthen it against the attacks of termites or woodborers; one selects the proper tree. In 90 out of 100 cases the quality of the wood, not any magical manipulation, is important for the purpose to which it is put, especially if the purpose is economic; and it is in this sense that empirical knowledge is highly developed. Even in the medical 824 757 sphere, which is predominantly magical, the ordinary man places his faith in the observed action of the herb he uses. The cure may be merely violent internal disturbances, which, in view of the supposed nature of the illness, may be regarded as necessary. The use is not for that reason [753] magical. Many diseases are conceived to have their seat in the stomach; they are to be thrown out by a purgative; and for them purgatives are ●[753] used with a vengeance. Among doctors, of course, all sorts of magical remedies are added; but that is the sphere of the specialist. The ordinary man uses remedies of which the visible effects are empirically related to the disturbances which he conceives to be the causes of the disease.

824 192 From close observation of the qualities of plants, the Lovedu have arrived at some classification of the flora. They recognize the similarity of plants of the same genus and, if external likeness is a matter of practical interest, there is often a similarity of the word used to designate the various species of the genus. This does not mean that they proceed upon genetic principles; to anatomical similarities in flowers, for instance, they are quite indifferent. If the qualities of two plants of the same genus are to their way of thinking significantly similar, the plants might receive names that are similar; if the qualities are dissimilar, they often know that the two plants are related, though they have different names. The same species modified in its external features by different environments is often given the same name. Species of the same genus are likewise sometimes distinguished by qualifications of the generic name. *Khiphadzo* of the plateau (*Mu nahe*) is, for instance, *Gymnosporia senegalensis*; *Khiphadzo* of stony places (*Mu mukhwarwe*) is *Gymnosporia buxifolia*. Again, *mudavhe*, *mudavhi*, *mudavhidi*, and *mudavhidzo*, all containing the root *dav-*, are all species of *Combretum*. On the other hand, *mupuri*, *mubvidi*, and *mububvu* (*bubu*) are also species of *Combretum*, but there are

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

CHAPTER XII

THE PURSUIT OF HEALTH

Anatomical conceptions in relation to the science of drugs and of healing—cardinal categories of the causation of disease—training for the medical profession—divinatory dice as a method of diagnosis.

LOBEDU therapy is linked, on the one hand with law, and on the other with medicine, magic, witchcraft, sorcery, and religion, but it is more closely interwoven with these last than with the first. If disease and death are the main objective of witchcraft and sorcery, disease is also the occasion of most religious rites, medicine the means of restoring the health of the human body and law the guarantee of the well-being of the social organism. Law and medicine are both largely concerned with the results of dissension between men. Open strife, which leads to social evils, is examined by the *Mowi* and resolved under the guidance of its wisdom; secret malice, which causes death and disease, is diagnosed by the bones and treated by the doctor; but for the detection of the deeds of darkness the *Mowi* calls in the aid of the doctor. The *Mowi* relies upon public discussion and its genius effects contact and reconciliation between one litigant and another, while the doctor uses private divination and his art inspires the consultant with confidence against his secret enemy. The social psychology of the one is the counterpart of the psycho-therapy of the other. But we must not think of them as essentially different worlds, the one primarily natural and the other primarily supernatural. The medico-magico-religious is to the Lovedu rather a tangible world of mundane arrangements and subject to 'natural' forces than a cosmos, inscrutable in its configuration and governed by 'supernatural' destinies. In truth, Lovedu healing is based to some extent upon observed relations between cause and effect though more largely upon practices and beliefs which, though they will not stand the tests of our science, constitute the psychological therapy of the society. We are far too apt to discount the value of their empirical body of knowledge, instead of using it to construct a sound scientific approach to medicine. We can also do better than scorn as superstitious absurdities those indispensable techniques of medicine which, because our medical profession takes little account of them, enable the charlatan and quack to flourish among us.

To understand Lovedu conceptions of the causation of disease, we must orientate ourselves from their knowledge of human anatomy. It is indeed very meagre. All they know has been gleaned indirectly from the slaughter of cattle and goats, for they practise neither embalming nor dissection of corpses. As a result, though they have names for all the more important organs of the body, they are not always sure of their correct location. Nor have they much idea of physiological function. They know that the stomach and intestines are digestive organs and that the bladder contains urine, but lungs and the diaphragm are vaguely connected with breathing. The womb, ovaries, and testicles are definitely reproductive organs, but in medical practice this function is obscured by the role of an

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

classification. Practice is characterized by vagueness and a very wide and 753
loose, instead of a specific, use of many of these terms. The term *khitshipidi* denotes primarily a swelling or tumour containing white matter. In practice we have found it applied to scrofula or glandular swellings below the ear, which were cut open and squeezed, to slime coughed up and said to be internal *khitshipidi*, and to general aching of all the teeth or tenderness of the gums with no sign of matter. Similarly the term *gobe*, bleeding of the nose, is often applied when there is no bleeding, but general debility, in which case the trouble is thought to be caused by blood in the body that should, but has not, come out. Such false correlations are due not merely to wrong conceptions of cause and effect—any evidence suggesting the presence of blood suffices to incriminate that arch enemy of health—but also to careless observation and loose reasoning. This laxity in medical conceptions is in marked contrast to the logic and coherence of other arrangements of the society. Inaccurate observation 787
and undeveloped symptomatology must be attributed to the extensive 785
reliance, firstly, for diagnosis of all but the most everyday illness upon the divining dice, and, secondly, for curing upon what in the last resort is the psychological rather than the physical.

Lovedu therapeutics includes a number of treatments that have un- 757
doubted curative value, but many more are based on purely magical conceptions. On the whole, those which we should consider to be of some medical value are chiefly home remedies of the humble non-divining herbalist. The higher one goes in the medical scale, the more divorced from scientific principles become the treatments. Simple ailments are dealt with very much as among Europeans: sniffing up water is used for colds, the milk of a certain euphorbia is applied to draw out deep-lying thorns; splints of strips of wood are used for broken limbs or 752
sprains; teeth are extracted by being levered up by means of an instrument like a poker, which is inserted between the roots, a method said to be no more painful than the clumsy use of European forceps. Very detrimental to the speedy recovery of wounds is, however, the practice of scraping or washing off all matter before each application of healing powders. This destroys the new young tissues, delaying for months the healing of sores that normally takes weeks or even days. Use of enemas is 757
unknown and emetics are not nearly so common as among the Zulu. With the Lovedu as with us the commonest treatment is the drinking of medicines. Instead, however, of the bottle of medicine we receive, a Native is given a small bundle of roots or twigs cut into even lengths to take home and boil in water which is drunk or used for making a soft porridge. Sometimes the medicine is brained and a cold infusion made. There is none of the careful measurement of quantities characteristic of the mediaeval apothecary or of prescriptions found on Egyptian papyri, but the amounts used are not wholly undetermined, for in practice the smallest pot is used and 1 to 2½ pints of water are added; the dose seldom exceeds a few mouthfuls taken once or twice a day for a few days only. If this is not effective, something else will be tried. Wet cupping is a common home remedy, as the numerous scars on head and shoulders of people testify. After scarification, a cupping horn is applied, the narrow

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

for a really weak patient. Sprinkling and *ku kuta*, combined very often with other treatments, are also used alone. When there is an epidemic of coughing or dysentery, it is said 'a wind has come' and a doctor is called to sprinkle the people to ward it off. *Ku kuta*, pressing a counter-irritant to the affected part, is used for toothache, when large pieces of heated bark are held to the cheek; for bruises, which are treated by the application of hot boiled leaves of certain trees; after childbirth, when hot porridge placed in a small flat basket is pressed daily to the stomach to ward off pains, and for many other purposes. But the hot poultice or emollient is not known.

Characteristically, the above-mentioned treatments are used both on occasions where they might be of real therapeutic value and for purifications and strengthenings where they could not. The principle of inoculation, which immunizes in diseases such as smallpox, is widely applied to effect cures and to further magical ends with which an empirical relation in our sense is wholly obscure. The relation must be sought, not in the objective link between cause and effect as we see it, but in the Lovedu conceptions of disease, their causes and symptoms, and in the cultural pattern of the methods by which evil may be cast out or symbolically laid upon a scapegoat. This is by no means as foreign to European thought as might at first be supposed, being used to this day among the more backward peasants both in Europe and in South Africa. A cure for headache among the Lovedu is to tie a piece of medicated string or sinew round the head for a day, after which it is cut and allowed to fall with the evil it has absorbed into a hole. To cure gout you scarify the leg to insert medicine, wiping off the blood with the leaves of a growing *mapapio* bush (*Euclea sp.*) to leave the disease on it. The frog is a common scapegoat. We once witnessed how, in the case of pulsating fontanelle of a baby, considered to be a grave danger, some of the medicine inserted into the scarifications, made around the throbbing spot and on other parts of the body, was placed on a green-and-white frog. The frog was stood on the fontanelle, where it puffed itself up by rhythmic inhalations not unlike the beating of the fontanelle and finally, as a scapefrog, to which the evil had been transmitted, it was taken back to the river. One method of curing convulsions is to shave the hair in two 'paths' which cross in the centre of the child's head and to make a dark cockroach, smeared with medicine, run along each path till it drops off. In curing barrenness and in initiation into the cult of possession, a goat, after being made to lie beside the patient or having its nostrils blown into, is killed and used in the treatment.

Lovedu medicines appear to us to be a jumble of science and magic. Fully 80 per cent. are of vegetable origin. There is hardly a plant in that rich lowveld vegetation which is not used in the pharmacopoeia of some herbalist or doctor and it is significant that new plants are constantly tried out. The pattern of supposed relations that are believed to exist between symptoms and diseases, of the unscientific analogies which we call sympathetic magic, and the use of roots and barks more frequently than leaves or flowers and fruits, limits the value of this testing out of medicines. Nevertheless, many drugs have effects which either obscure or

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

278 cure the symptoms, and whether for that reason and its psychological
757 effect or because of a truly curative value, men have great faith in the
755 medicines. There are undoubtedly ingredients in Lovedu medicines which cannot be empirically related to either symptom or cure, since they operate mainly by a technique of analogies which we relegate to the magical world. Such are animal products like hair, skin, excrement, and ovaries used in a variety of ways—for instance, for barrenness and indigestion; minerals like ironstone used for strengthening babies; and sea or river products, sand and shells, indispensable for keeping witches out of the village. But to Lovedu men and women the use of such ingredients in no way differs from the use of a herb: both are thought to have curative value and for them our distinction between magical and scientific treatments, between cause and effect and false analogy, does not exist. Just as a herb may have properties for curing disease, so, for example, the backbone of a python is effective in curing general debility or backache. The bone is pounded and the powder inoculated into scarifications along the back, by which means the immense power of the python is thus imparted to the patient. But note the sequel. So powerful is this medicine that the patient, when his time has come, will have difficulty in dying. His eyes will remain alive though the body is dead until once more the python powder is applied by being burned under his nose that he may inhale the smoke. This strengthening and the reversal of its influence are like injection and desensitization in our medical practice.

751 When we pursue Lovedu conceptions as regards the nursing and treat-
ment of patients, we have once more to regard them from their
[515 point of view. Cleanliness and hygiene are very remotely related to health.
777] Flies are freely tolerated because it is unluckyto kill them, not because, as is held in some other tribes, abundance of flies means riches in cattle. Invalids are not given a special diet, so that instructions by European doctors that a mother should feed her ailing baby on vitamin-containing foods or fruits are ignored unless medicine is given to be mixed with the food. It is equally fatal to appeal to the curative powers of nature: an invalid will impute unwillingness to help, ignorance or even sinister designs, if you tell him that nature will heal him and give no medicine. It is medicine and medicine alone that is thought to heal. But even medicine is never allowed much time in which to do its curative work. If one drug is not effective within a week it will be changed for another. Often a number of medicines are used at the same time, so that if one is ineffectual the other may heal. In every case we attended we found Native treatment was being given at the same time as, and often to the detriment of, our own. Nor would our protests be of any avail. Even in hospitals there are secret chewings of herbs and surreptitious steamings. Though it is admitted that certain medicines may not 'agree' when used together, use of the wrong medicine is not thought to have any harmful effects. At the most, a medicine merely does not heal; it never definitely harms the patient. Inexactness in the quantity of medicine taken is accompanied by a laxity in the carrying out of doctors' instructions which, though of no consequence where Native medicines are used, may do immense harm if the medicines are European. A careful

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

755 The distinctive characteristic of the doctor with 'power' is that he is a
791 diviner. That must necessarily be so in a society in which pathology is the science of diseases, the nature and causes of which lie so largely in magico-witchcraft conceptions. Special techniques are called for in place of what we call diagnosis and bedside manner. The diviner's function is, however, more than that: he must be called in about the details of every religious ceremony to discover the wishes of the ancestors; he decides where, in order to avoid the danger of the witch, every village must be built; he makes the witch-proof fence. Besides the bone-thrower, to whom we shall refer as doctor and who is consulted at every turn, there are two other classes of diviner, the *lelipo* doctor and the *mugwae*, both foreign introductions from the East. The *lelipo* doctor is often a tribesman, the *mugwae* always a Shangana-Tonga, preferably living outside Ulovedu. The spheres of these classes of diviner are different: the doctor heals disease and is the general medical practitioner in its wide Lovedu sense; the *lelipo* doctor, almost always a woman, initiates the 'possessed', and often is also a general practitioner, divining with bones and healing disease, especially barrenness and ailments of children; and the *mugwae* is, as we have seen, the forensic physician, and if he is famous he keeps no medicines, though otherwise he combines smelling out of the guilty with a general medical practice. Both *mugwae* and *lelipo* doctors claim direct inspiration from the ancestors, but the doctor reads his bones by rule.

As it is difficult to persuade outsiders to divulge their knowledge, the profession of doctor, in theory open to all, is in practice more often than not handed down in the family, from father to son or daughter, maternal uncle to nephew, husband to wife, or even wife to husband. Interest and inclination determine who the pupil will be. To acquire a working knowledge of the bones, with which people are generally familiar to some extent, may take only a few months, but it is useless knowledge unless one has medicines and experience, which may take years to acquire. Ambitious doctors spend their lives gaining these perquisites, buying from one, begging from another, colleague; many travel from tribe to tribe or go periodically to Johannesburg, where good money is to be made. There are many specialists: Ramavulana, like his father before him, is a noted rain-maker; Mambye is a master of *mulilishi*, by which he changes people into animals or hangs organs of the victim of his vengeance-magic on pegs in the hut; Mashao makes the hedge of the *gyali* lodge witch-proof; Rathavula strengthens the queen for office; Mulebye doctors the boys' circumcision lodge. A doctor who has not inherited cannot easily acquire such specialized knowledge: the price is high and the secrets not readily given away. The greatest doctors are said to use human remains in their most potent medicines, and to satisfy this need there are *ensigwegwe*, murderers who waylay and kill people at night. During our stay, people, even at public gatherings, discussed and warned against the activities and haunts of these murderers. The wife of Thagu, the doctor, one night came home very drunk and next morning discovered part of her genitals excised. She accused her husband in the district *khoro* and, though he denied the crime, he paid the fine. As

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

Thago is not a great doctor, people surmised that he wanted the flesh, not for himself, but as the price of a medicine he bought from a renowned doctor. 755 791

A good doctor, unless, as is most common, he grows up in the profession, undergoes a long period of *ad hoc* training of 'walking about' with doctors. Mafwabani, who hoped by becoming a doctor to save his family the expense of constantly calling in medical aid, began by going about with doctors he knew, from time to time persuading them to show him a few medicines; he put his knowledge to successful use in his family and started collecting a set of bones, buying those he could not pick up himself. Gradually he acquired the elements of divining, finishing up his training at the feet of a Shangana-Tonga *mugwau*. Tuition in divining teaches one the various combinations of the dice; really to 'know' the bones one must drink their soup in a ceremony called 'cooking the bones'. It is the only cooking the dice undergo, so that it is taboo to use bones that have been cooked as food; it completes a diviner's training, and it not only creates a bond between dice and diviner, but gives him insight to see what is obscure to others. The ceremony varies from doctor to doctor, but contains in essence of three main features. Firstly, a young cockerel or, according to older custom, a goat is killed, its flesh is cooked with the dice and the broth is drunk by the pupil. The cock quickens perception both of bones and diviner, for it heralds the dawn before man perceives its approach. Secondly, the novice is given medicine (by inoculation or as a drink) containing *inter alia* the heart and nose of the vulture and wild dog, as well as sometimes the heart of the cooked fowl, so that he may sense things from afar. And, thirdly, the bones are buried at the cross-roads overnight 'to gather the news' and next morning are unearthed. When a male passes, a bone representing a male, when a female passes one representing a female, is taken out, and a beer drink is given so as to ensure many passers-by. Thereafter the novice can tell, in a test to which he is submitted, how the bones have fallen without looking at them.

Possession, in the ordinary manner of the cult, but by a spirit who in life was a doctor, constitutes the initiation of a *lidipo* doctor. He may divine during possession when the possessing spirit speaks or chants, or he may throw the dice when not possessed like an ordinary doctor. If during possession the dice are thrown, it is merely for effect, for they are hardly looked at. It is claimed that *lidipo* doctors read dice without training, being guided by their spirit; but in practice we found that either they had for months attached themselves to another doctor or, as members of a divining family, had become familiar with the bones prior to possession. The *mugwau*, like the *lidipo* doctor, is guided by a spirit which manifests its desire that he should become a diviner by making him ill, but, unlike the *lidipo* doctor, he is not actually possessed. The *mugwau* is the master diviner, but in fact he seldom throws the dice more than once or twice before proceeding to divine 'by the heart'. His initiation comprises the curing of his illness, apprenticeship to another *mugwau* and the cooking of the bones. *Lidipo* doctor or *mugwau* and guiding spirit are closely associated. A *lidipo* doctor never uses a goat in healing, without setting

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

aside pieces of meat for his spirit, and a *mugome* always has his special shrine where he reports all money professionally earned. An ordinary doctor sometimes has a shrine where he places horns of goats received or hangs medicine bags when he prays to the spirits, but many do not have these things. To a doctor his divination is like a craft that he has learnt, and he gives offerings only when scarcity of clients is attributed to the displeasure of the gods. When about to divine, he begs the bones to tell him the truth, not the ancestors for guidance.

The divinatory dice constitute the chief diagnostic method. The Lovedu set is fairly stereotyped, consisting of about forty pieces, most but not all of which are bones; the bones and *hakati* shells (oval-shaped stones of a fruit) of the Shangana-Tonga *mugome* are somewhat different. Dominating the usual Lovedu set are four flat pieces of ivory or bone, two male and two female, which fall in sixteen different combinations, the cardinal positions. Each position has its own name and its own praise referring, though vaguely, to its meaning; and it is these four pieces from which the general configuration of influences or prognostications is read. There are other sets of four: pieces from the ventral surface of a tortoise, each with two easily distinguishable sides, and shells, two Oliva standing for males and two Cypraea standing for females. Having thrown the dice, the diviner looks first at the ivory pieces and gives the praise of their disposition, which indicates the general situation, say, dissension, loss, or complaints of the father's sister. But this general situation must be related to the lie of certain other bones, particularly *mulope*, the knuckle-bone of the steenbuck (*Raphicerus campestris*), from which, as representing the chief, the diviner next orientates the situation. The procedure thereafter involves linking this situation, on the one hand, with events or specific prognostications of good or evil and, on the other, with people playing a part in these events. *Thohadu* or *mudimo*, the talus of the antbear, represents the ancestors, who, like the antbear, live underground, shows whether they are angry or not, and is diagnostic of the health or life of a person which in the last resort lies in ancestral hands. *Dau*, the phalanx of the lion (or in some sets *ngwe*, the phalanx of the tiger) which is also a pointing bone showing direction, *phiri*, the knee-bone of the hyena, of which there may be two, male and female, and *tshwene*, male and female kneebones of the baboon, all stand for the evil power of witches and their familiars. The baboon bones, in addition, indicate, by the side on which they fall, danger or illness on a journey, suitability of the spot for building upon and, in case of barrenness, whether or not a child will be born. Every set contains two morula pips with functions less specific, depending as they do upon the whole configuration of forces or events, and a river pebble, *lemoja la guswi*, the thing swallowed by a crocodile, which is diagnostic of *khileso*, the illness caused by foreign substances which sorcerers cause their victims to swallow with food or drink.

To bring these evil or good influences into relation with specific people, to determine who is ill or who is bewitching the consultants, the diviner turns to certain astragalus bones, capable of falling on four sides and representing people. Two or three sheep bones stand for important

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

or respected persons, such as district or village heads, and goat bones, numbering two to six, for mere commoners—a real separation of sheep and goats. If there are two goat bones, they represent male and female; a third represents a child; four bones extends the range to male and female children, and the further two bones differentiate widow and bachelor. Different totems are shown by bones of the animals revered. Lovedu sets have two (male and female) *maglowa* (rietbuck) bones standing for the Crocodile totemic group; two *phala* (rooibuck) bones for Khalaga and sometimes also Lovedu; two *gulwa* (wild boar) for Lovedu, two *phudi* (duiker) for Khaba and Koni; two *skoko* (bushbuck) for the Tabedzi of Maoulana; and in areas in which there are Phalaborwa and Thavina also two *nago* (porcupine). Elephants and lions are represented by the bones of these animals. These totem-indicating bones vary greatly according to the people with whom the diviner comes into most contact. Many diviners have one or two extra pieces, such as a shell or a stone found in a strange place. Malematsha, for instance, has a piece of chalk from France, where he served in the labour battalion during the Great War.

The detailed rules of divination are far too complicated for treatment in a general ethnographical study, but a few general principles, common knowledge to all in the society, may be mentioned. Firstly, it is the side on which the bones fall rather than their disposition to one another that is important. All the pieces cast fall in two ways, either positive, dorsal, or negative, ventral surface up, while in addition the astralagi have two narrower surfaces, one, the concave side, with a deeper cleft than the other, the convex side. In the normal position, with dorsal side up, the power the bone stands for is said to be active, the person it represents well or walking in the direction it is lying; in the reverse position, with ventral side up, it is sleeping, powerless or dead and hence, when the people represented are witches, a good sign, for they are then on their backs and harmless. An astralagus lying on its convex side with the cleft up shows laughing, happiness, talking, or even quarrelling (much talking), and with convex side up, anger, complaints, sadness. Secondly, the significance of these positions and particularly of the combinations of the sets of four bones varies according to the purpose of the divination: a particular position means one thing when it is illness, another when it is a building site that is in question. Thirdly, despite intricate rules, divination is in the last resort not an exact science, but an interpretation in which the diviner's ingenuity, his knowledge of human nature and his estimate of the interplay of motives in the society play an important part. In this connexion, the praises of each bone and of various positions have an unexpected function. These praises are not trade secrets and are fairly generally known; to be word-perfect is unnecessary and parts may be recited or omitted, while half may be uttered at one moment and the remainder much later. This occupies the mind of the client and gives the diviner time to think and orientate himself. Moreover, interpretation abounds with metaphorical expressions, as does the parlance of European fortune-tellers with club-men and diamond-girls. Many Lovedu diviners, imitating the *mugome*, use a peculiar chant, half Shangana-Tonga, half

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

787 Sotho, a jargon difficult to understand and reinterpreted by the doctor or
755 by some one of the party more conversant than the client with the procedure.

The procedure in divination is a subtle process combining suggestion, free association of ideas, and techniques of leading the client and inspiring confidence in the diviner. On opening the bags, the doctor pours out the dice and watches how they fall, but he does not always vouchsafe anything at this stage. Before casting his dice, he chews a piece of root (*Mairugula*), which he blows out on to the bones: both he and the bones are thereby given insight and power. Then, taking them in both hands and uttering a praise by way of encouragement, he casts them on to the floor or on the mat provided. At this stage he reads the cardinal positions, perhaps elaborating on the general trend indicated, and suggests what the client has come to consult him about, often in so doing eliciting some information. Thereafter the client himself throws the bones, speaking to them as dictated by the doctor; the practice of bringing a piece of rag breathed upon by the patient is not known, but the consultant may be directed to mention the patient's name. The client will have to cast many times till the trouble has been thrashed out. The next step is for the doctor, after suggesting a remedy, to cast the bones and interpret their reply to the suggestion. Whatever the cause of the illness, the first suggestion is always placation of the ancestors and thereafter medicines and treatments. At each throw only some of the dice are studied, the position of the others being irrelevant to the immediate purpose. Sometimes it takes long (often as we have seen, over two hours or a whole afternoon) for the bones to give a clear indication and, if they fall in unreadable combinations, various causes may be assigned: the bones may not have been properly 'washed'; or a condition precedent to effective divination may have been omitted, such as in one case we witnessed, when the consultant's people had not yet held the removal of 'dirt' (*khitshila*) ceremony after the death of a child; or the bones may unaccountably 'refuse'.

To illustrate the procedure, we give an actual case of divination simplified by the omission of the praises. Ramatiti, the doctor, had just finished divining for Dumedi when Dwagu, Dumedi's friend who lived some ten miles away, came upon the scene and, handing over his *li.* to the doctor, asked that the dice be thrown for him. Ramatiti poured out the bones, looked at them, but remained silent. He then chewed a piece of *Mairugula*, took the bones in both hands, spat on them and, mumbling a praise, cast them. 'They have fallen *masiregure*' (a position meaning dissension), he said, uttering the relevant praise. 'You have been greatly troubled,' he continued, enlarging upon the greatness of the trouble. 'The tortoise bones lie *matagola*' (indicating long illness), he added. 'You suffer from "blood" and intestinal trouble. Do you have dreams?' 'Yes,' replied Dwagu, 'chiefly about dead people.' '*Tshuesi*' (the baboon bones), went on the doctor, 'are full [lie on their convex side]; your sickness is on the chest.' Thereupon Dwagu was given the bones to throw and told to repeat after the doctor a praise of the bones: 'Tell us you spy with eyes that see, tell us why we are afflicted; whether it be a god or whether it be

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

a witch, tell us.' When the bones had fallen, Ramaiti asked, 'Do you know any *gamu* [man of the Crocodile totem]? Are your in-laws Crocodile?' 'No,' replied Dwagu, 'I know only neighbours, not relatives, who are Crocodile.' After Dwagu had denied that he had quarrelled with these people, the doctor warned him not to drink beer with them, and when he objected, 'But we are always drinking together', the doctor said. 'It is they who have given you *khilone*.' Dwagu was doubtful, but replied, 'I remember that once, when I came out of the *gamuna* "school", a son of these neighbours gave me monkey nuts and afterwards my stomach was upset.'

Dwagu threw the bones again and the doctor asked him if he were troubled by matter in the ears. Dwagu admitted that both his ears were affected and added, 'That is how the trouble began, and I have tried many remedies in vain.' The doctor now had a substantial clue. 'The ears are causing blood on the chest', he said. 'Has a *lekgo* doctor tried to cure you?' 'No,' Dwagu replied. 'Only a woman who was one day called for my mother.' The bones were once more thrown to determine whether the woman would succeed if she were called again. The *malopo* bone lay on its back and with *dou* and *phiri* upside down, showing the power of the witches to be broken, and *golowe* (wild boar) in its normal position, the doctor declared that Dwagu would recover. But, though it was silently passed over, the diviner was mistaken in thinking that his client was of the *golowe* totem. Again Dwagu threw the dice and the question asked, viz. whether he should offer to (*nama*) his dead father, was answered in the negative; but though *phiri* (hyena) and *tshowai* (baboon) lay powerless, the positive position of the lion (*dou*), associated with witches, indicated that the stomach-ache would remain. 'Have you biliousness?' inquired the doctor. 'No.' 'Well, then, do you enjoy your beer?' 'No,' was the reply. 'But one calabash fills my stomach; I can't drink much.' Another throw, this time by the doctor, was favourable to the medicine mentioned as a cure. 'But,' asked the doctor, as he scrutinized the bones, 'what child at home is ill?' When Dwagu said it was his, the doctor congratulated himself on his perspicacity and could not resist following up his success.

Dwagu thus had to cast the dice about his child. The doctor diagnosed *mate* (sores), a vague term covering external rashes or sores of all kinds, as well as internal trouble, and a common complaint of children. 'Yes,' replied Dwagu. 'The sores are in its mouth,' adding a full account of the complaint. The *khilone* goat bone (indicating a young male person) was lying positive, so the doctor said, 'It is a boy,' but again he was wrong. Unperturbed, the doctor now threw the dice, having suggested the cure, 'Dung of witches (metaphorical for the insectivorous bat) and mice and moss hanging from trees. Burn one portion holding the child in the smoke and smear its body with the other portion. Tell us, you spy with eyes that see. I say let the fowl (child) be well.' But the bone standing for a small girl fell on its back: the medicine would not succeed. Again the doctor threw, mentioning different ingredients, but similar treatment, and this time the bones were propitious.

The doctor is an important person in the society, not because his

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

787 practice brings him wealth, but because disease is a matter of ever-
●788 present interest. He is paid chiefly in beer, which provides entertainment for friends and neighbours, payer and payee, and enhances his prestige. The family doctor usually receives nothing at all, but is called to beer that is drunk in the family. Diviners receive the 1s. or fowl for divination and perhaps, if they are mercenary or have taken great pains about the medicine, 5s. for opening the medicine bags; but payment for treatment is made only for successful cures. A patient should on recovery not shave his head before bringing beer to the doctor, when the 'hair of his illness' is shaved, perhaps with medicine by the doctor and taken to a hollow tree, where it is left with the words 'Sickness remain there'; but this rule is, as often as not, observed in the breach. The correct charge for curing barrenness or epilepsy is £1 or £1 10s., yet we have seen many cures of barrenness for which only beer was given. The means of the patient and his relationship to the doctor are material factors. *Lelige* doctors are usually mercenary, requiring a goat for most of their treatments and fining patients who shave their heads without permission. *Mugowe* are the wealthiest doctors, receiving anything from £1 to £7 at one sitting. Many set up temporary villages along the roads to catch clients, and one living in Portuguese East Africa has a levy for transporting clients from the Transvaal lowveld to his home. The *mugowe* exacts full payment before he divines; other doctors have to wait until the cure is effected. A doctor never goes to court about his fees, but he sometimes threatens to cover up the holes where he dug the medicines to call back illness upon the patient.

When medicines are not effective, it is etiquette to acquaint the doctor with the fact before going to a second doctor, but this etiquette is not always observed. Health is the quest of every one at all times, and disease is the most persistent and dangerous enemy of the individual; for the causes of illness are incalculable and even the most harmless disease may let in the witch to strike at his victim. The office of the doctor is both important and honourable, for he is the guardian of the people's welfare. There is no oath that binds him to loyalty and integrity, but these things are expected of him; he even preserves the secrets of his clients and, though the *mugowe* advertises himself, such action by a doctor is regarded as derogatory.

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

the complaint is either given or required; and frequently no special spirit is mentioned. It is enough to know the cause of the trouble and what sin is necessary to placate the gods. Even complaints of neglect are usually put positively: 'He complains that you should give him (his shrine) a libation'. The ancestors desire chiefly to be remembered: they want their heads worn, their names revered, a beast or goat dedicated to and named after them. They also like to be told about journeys undertaken or marriages, in much the same way as the living, and to be approached with a libation. Yet, unlike the Ngoni, they never complain of being hungry; nor are the gods said to drink the libation or even its spiritual counterpart, but are merely pleased to be given their due. There is no such thing as coming secure because you have done all that is necessary for the gods; there is always some ancestor who can cause trouble, and it is best to wait and see what is wanted. Moreover, the ancestors are wayward; there is no knowing what they may desire. Mambush asked to be buried at Khikhovi, but after his death he caused sickness, saying, 'Why did you bury me in the valley in the sun' (instead of in the ancestral grove), and a black sheep had to be sacrificed on his grave. Similarly, Mulugwane, brother of the queen, who in 1934 became a Christian on his death-bed, withheld rain in 1935 because they had buried him in a Christian cemetery. Religious rites among the Lovedu tend, therefore, to be addressed to those spirits that cause trouble and in the absence of illness there may be no rites at all.

Certain objects which were once in the possession of the ancestors are used in religious ceremonial and are thought to have special powers of protection and healing. These objects, consisting of ancient beads of glass or native-worked iron or copper, native-wrought assegais, knobkerries, iron rods with spiked heads, are handed down in the family and carefully cherished. Very often when a daughter leaves to be married, she is given a few beads to take with her for use when she is ill. Such charms are called *thupalo*. Illness caused by an ancestor can generally be cured by a ceremony known as *ho phasa*: a mixture of ground grain and water is poured over beads or other *thupalo* objects in the presence of the patient while a prayer, scolding the spirits and asking for health, is made. The beads are then worn by the patient till he recovers. After *ho phasa* on beads for any one, he may wear them at any time with protective results, and small children generally wear many old beads. Mawethu called here 'my hospital' (*sphala sa ga*) to illustrate their powers to us in European idiom. Petunia says, if he does not wear the crocodile bone that was his father's, he gets ill or dreams much of dead people. Association with the ancestors, not anything inherent in these objects, gives them their powers, for we have seen an old Boer gun brought out as a *thupalo* at an offering. Yet for a charm to heal it is not essential that it should have been in the possession either of the complaining ancestor himself or of his family. Sometimes the gods, through the diviner, mention beads or other objects not known in the family at all. It is then concluded that they have been lost and steps are taken to procure them from some one else or from the queen, who has many. Then when they pray, it will be mentioned: 'We are replacing the lost bead.'

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

771 The form in which it is found is different from that among Shangana-
794 Tonga and lent itself to ready incorporation into Lovedu religion.
177 Among Shangana-Tonga, the possessing spirit is regarded as a foreign spirit from some outside tribe; among the Lovedu it is an ancestor who may, like any ancestor, demand the usual shrine or dedicated animal. The cult is not accepted by all and the royal family deprecate it as foreign and as detracting from their prestige. Its noisiness and showiness, though incongruous with the traditional reserve and lack of display, makes a popular appeal in these more insecure days.

794 A spirit entering a person causes illness and the first object of the cult
753 is directed at curing the illness, so that initiation is regarded as therapeutic. Long-continued illness of a patient, which will yield to no curative treatment, will be diagnosed as due to an ancestral spirit 'pressing him down', because it wants to manifest itself in him. The symptoms are never very definite: Mashishimali was 'ill all over the body' and suffered from swollen legs which five different doctors had tried unsuccessfully to cure; Mamolatela was weak and ailing after the birth of her first child. The symptoms are neither violent, like the running amuck which accompanies *ukuthwasa* among the Nguni, nor of a specifically nervous nature.
[228] Epilepsy, which is common, bears no relation to possession, and any peculiar behaviour is more liable to be attributed to witchcraft than to the spirits. It is believed that a possessed person after death likes in turn to manifest itself in some descendant and there is a tendency for possession to run in families. In one family three sisters and their mother were all possessed. Sometimes, especially where others in the family are possessed, a person does not even get ill; he just becomes possessed when people are singing or dancing in the manner of the cult. Contact with certain localities or people associated with possession is often sufficient. Thus it is said that, should one be among the Sekhwasha in Portuguese East Africa, who become possessed in a manner different from the Lovedu, one risks becoming possessed by merely picking up something dropped by a member of that tribe or eating the fruit of the fig, *mudzomma* (*Diospyros mespiliformis*), or *munzhekhe* (*Cassia petersiana*).

794 Once it is known that a person is being 'pressed down' by some spirit
● 755 wishing to manifest itself, a *lalapo* doctor, himself possessed and skilled in dealing with the possessed, is called to cure the patient. This is done, not by exorcism, but by rites designed to enable the spirit to come and make known its wishes along legitimate channels, known in the cult. For the spirits that possess people are not evil spirits to be expelled; they are the ancestors whom one worships, and their desire occasionally to manifest themselves through some living relative is comparable to that impulse towards life that makes them desire shrines, dedicated animals, and the perpetuation of their names in their descendants. The method by which a spirit is enabled to 'come out' and disclose its identity and the possessed person to become the host (*ladala*) of the spirit without being ill consists largely of dancing; and on all subsequent occasions when the
794 spirits manifest themselves they signify their desire to dance.
755 Dancing is the central feature of the cult. The spirits are thought to
535 enjoy this dancing; when manifesting themselves at festivities of the

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

possessed, they often say they have come to 'play' with the others and they may even cause slight ill-health on this account. Hence quite often when a possessed person does not feel well, he will ask for the drums, saying he must dance. *Lelipo* dancing consists of fast movements of the foot to the accompaniment of drums or tambourines and rattles. At a seance of *malipo a zwikwe*, those who speak *Thsivlo*, the large hemispherical *gwa* drum is used in addition to the conical drums. All are, however, beaten with the hands, the elbows being placed on the drumskin in a peculiar manner. *Malipo*, who speak Sotho or Lovedu, use only the conical drums in the ordinary manner.

If the dance has a great fascination—after a seance one finds even small children practising the steps—the dress worn by the possessed adds to the attraction. Cloths of different colours are worn round the waist and tied at the back; round the legs are usually leggings of the outer shell of the *dipuri* (*Oncoba spinosa*) fruit filled with pebbles to rattle as one dances; on the head is a cap of fur or brightly coloured wool or a head-gear of black feathers, while very often a spear, battle-axe, or stick is brandished in the hand. These are the *swipheno* of the spirit, worn only during possession. The nature of the dress of each possessed person has been indicated by the spirit itself, and people do their best to comply, lest the possessed person dies. Once at a seance the spirit of a woman asked that a beast or, failing that, a goat be 'placed' for him. 'We'll do our best,' the relatives replied, 'but remember we are poor and it is a matter that will take time.' The spirit, angry at this unwillingness, retorted, 'If you don't comply, I'll take away my person [in whom I manifest myself] and go and sleep with her. Tell Makhado (elder brother of the possessed who learnt the profession of doctor from the spirit) I'll take away my profession from him.' 'We'll do our best,' urged the relatives, 'but don't go away in anger.' In spite of this power, possessing spirits have nevertheless to take cognizance of public opinion and the desires of royalty. The spirit of the wife of a royal relative asked for a man's loin-cloth, which women possessed by male spirits occasionally wear, but he refused to allow it on the grounds that for a woman to wear man's attire is unbecoming. An old woman therefore addressed the spirit, saying, 'People here don't like it,' and the spirit was satisfied.

A short description of an institution which contains all the elements of an ordinary seance must suffice to illustrate some of the main features of the cult. When the doctor, called to conduct the initiation, has arrived with his or her attendants, drums are fetched from the district head, and other disciples of the doctor invited to be present. Nothing can, however, be done before the spirit of the doctor descends upon her. To allow this, they retire to a hut and lie down as if to sleep, while an old woman puts down some pinches of snuff on the ground and calls upon the spirits to come. In a few minutes the doctor groans and quivers and the spirit signifies its arrival by a song of greeting. It calls for its *lelipo* clothes and the doctor is dressed. Soon the spirits of her attendants also arrive and treatment, which consists in making the novitiate dance, is begun.

When Betty was being initiated, we arrived early one Saturday evening, attracted by the noise, to find a picturesque scene. It was winter and

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

794 five little fires had been lit in the vicinity of the courtyard of Betty's hut.
755 In the centre were three women dancing to the music of drums and
535 rattles. We sat down by the nearest fire and found ourselves with a group
786 of old women. For people had arranged themselves, naturally as in their manner, in age-groups round the various fires; young married women at one, small boys at another, girls above the age of puberty at a third. The dust rose high; what had sounded pleasant enough at a distance became, as one sat in its midst, an almost unbearable din; while in the flickering and uncertain light of the fires the dancing took on a frenzied effect that lent to the scene a wildness and weirdness seldom met with except in travellers' tales of darkest Africa. Never again in our frequent attendances at *malopo* dancing did we recapture that first sense of weirdness so largely due to its novelty and our own ignorance. That night the dancing stopped at 1.30 a.m. but by dawn it had begun again, continuing with intervals of rest during the whole of Sunday and Sunday night. Betty danced most of the time; if she rested too long, the women urged her on, saying, 'How do you expect the spirit to come out if you don't dance?' All this time she was being treated with medicines: black powder mixed with butter fat was smeared on her legs, white froth of medicine churned with a porridge stirrer was applied on various parts of the body, some being administered also internally, and infusions were given her to drink. No food was eaten either by Betty or by the women whose spirits were upon them; the very sight of porridge makes some *malopo* vomit and the only sustenance allowed while dancing is beer, if there happens to be any.

Late on Sunday afternoon they called her mother's brother to try to induce the spirit to manifest itself, for doctors had indicated that the troubling spirit was on the mother's side. Taking a calabash of water in his hand, the mother's brother knelt near the dancing girl and spat mouthfuls of water out on the ground, saying, 'Come out, spirit, that this person also may be well. She remains silking, and when we go to doctors they tell us it is a spirit. Come outside that this person can be well [cool].' Sometimes, instead of *ku phasa* with water, mixed grains of all kinds are thrown over the dancer and the words used are, 'We are giving you everything to come.' It may even be that something, which can be overcome only by magical means, is holding back the spirit, as when, on one occasion, the spirit was said to be bewildered at the cross-roads, not knowing which to take. All the roads except that leading into the village were magically 'barred' and the spirit, thus guided, came straight in and manifested itself. Difficult as it is for a spirit to come on the first occasion, once initiation has taken place, it becomes a simple matter. To make a spirit manifest itself, a person has only to dance in the manner of the cult or to lie down while some one calls on it to come. The spirit may also come of its own accord at any time without being induced.

794 Early on the Monday morning Betty, showing signs of exhaustion,
765 began to stagger in her dancing, and people knew the spirit must be near. Her movements became more frenzied, she put up her hands to her head and dragged her feet uncertainly, and then fell to the ground. Several women who had been expecting this, caught and carried her, still quivering and groaning, into the hut. 'Good day, grandparent. Come nicely,

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

grandparent,' they kept saying. After a few moments Betty began a song, 748
one usually sung on the arrival of a spirit, giving the name of the spirit 747
upon her—namely, Mamaile, her mother's mother. Those present sang
the refrain to the accompaniment of rattles. Staggerings and fallings,
groanings or growlings are always signs of an approaching spirit; some-
times the possessed person runs away for a short distance. A goat was
now brought into the hut. Its body was smeared with medicine, some was
poured down its throat and, after the patient had breathed hard into its
mouth, it was taken out and killed. Under supervision of the doctor,
small pieces were cut from all parts and placed in a bowl, while the
stomach contents and portion of the liver were set aside to be used in
curing the patient. The experts say that the sickness from which the
ancestor suffered before its death and which presumably causes the
patient to suffer, goes into the goat. Before proceeding further, the doctor
took the bowl of meat to the hut entrance, where, after setting aside half
of it, she placed it with a little snuff on the ground, praying to her spirit.
Later this meat was roasted and eaten by small boys. The stomach con-
tents were smeared on various parts of the body of the patient; the small
pieces of meat were roasted, mixed with a black powder, and administered
on the end of a stick to all four of the possessed people present.

The doctor now busied herself charring chips of various kinds of bark
in a basin in which some of the goat's liver had also been put. With this
the patient was smoked three times under a blanket till she coughed and
spluttered. This took a considerable time, during which the other
possessed women sang songs in turn. Mabelowa, who is possessed by
a man, called for her pipe in which some hemp was put and evinced great
astonishment when her fellow wife, her attendant when she is possessed,
struck a match to light it. This was a European innovation unknown in
the days of her spirit. Similarly, when a potato was brought, all the
possessed women examined it with wonder, asking each other whether it
was edible. While the meat of the goat was being cooked with medicine
in three pots for those present, the possessed women sat outside on a
mat, an honour accorded to their spirits. They sat, silent and dignified,
saying nothing. A fowl was killed in order that its leg might afford a
medicine bag for the patient and the chips of bark used in smoking were
ground to a powder to be used by the patient when eating of the first-
fruits. It might be mentioned that the doctor carried home with her the
hind leg, shoulder, and breast of the goat as her share, while the other
meat was regarded as a reward to the crowd for its share in dancing and
singing.

For some time people sat and talked to their friends while the doctor 744
worked with her medicines and the possessed women sat quietly in the 755
shade. Suddenly we became aware of a kind of pantomime in which the 535
initiate, directed in song by the doctor, was made to play-act all the work
of women. She went to fetch water and wood about 20 yards from home,
swept the courtyard, imitated hoeing, the stamping and winnowing of
mealies, cooking and dishing up, finally serving food in the correct
manner to the small boy whose mother she had married (Betty had
married her father's sister). Last of all she was taken to the drums and

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

shown how to dance in possessed fashion, all, it was said, lest when her spirit left her she should be lazy and not know how to work. Betty walked on in a dream with a wooden, expressionless look and at times appeared so exhausted that we feared she would not be able to lift the stamper when imitating stamping. This mime-show is not performed in all initiations, nor is a goat always killed, for the methods of doctors differ considerably and the patient's relatives may have no goat. Often the patient is set to dance and treated with medicines till she falls down with the spirit upon her.

It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and, the initiation being complete, the doctor thought it time that the spirits departed. She ushered the possessed into the hut, where they all sat down, offered them each a pinch of snuff, took a rattle and began her farewell song, the whole company (for the hut had filled with spectators) joining in the refrain. Next the initiate sang her farewell song, mentioning what she wanted as her accessories—several white cloths, a woollen cap, and a spear to hold when dancing. When all had finished singing, they took off their *mujhawo* (clothes), which their attendants (for each possessed person has some one to help him when his spirit appears) put into bundles to take away, and lay down to sleep. After three minutes the doctor grunted and groaned as departing spirits are apt to do, sat up and began dressing in everyday clothes. The others followed her example and went outside. The patient, but a short while before so exhausted, came smiling out of the hut and scolded the people for letting her oversleep in this shocking manner (appearing to have no knowledge of her initiation). Then all washed their faces and urinated in the hedge, as women do on rising in the mornings.

Initiation into the cult is said to make the person well again, and all into whose history one inquiries claim to have been cured. Betty herself had no further trouble. If, however, they become ill again, it may be a second spirit, for many people have three or four. There is, however, no further initiation; the second spirit is merely called upon to manifest itself. A second or third spirit may take possession without causing any illness, merely announcing its arrival and making known its wants when the person is possessed. After initiation the spirit manifests itself when it has some complaint or desire, when the person has broken some taboo, or when specially induced by dancing or prayer. A possessed person has to keep certain taboos: he may never eat such firstfruits as pumpkin leaves or green mealies, *morula* fruits or beer made of the newly-harvested corn without medicine given him at his initiation and renewable every year or every two years; any new thing undertaken, as when a possessed woman becomes pregnant, must be reported to the spirit. Some *malopo* may not be beaten with a green stick, lest the spirit descend upon them; others may not touch European medicine. Many of them run away from Europeans even when not actually possessed, and one man had to keep his books securely locked in a suit-case lest his wife should see them and become troubled by her spirit. The very mention of the word *lalapo* in the presence of some may cause the spirit to come. Observances are not the same for all and taboos to be observed depend largely on the doctor who

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

does the initiation. There are no special burial rites associated with the cult. There is, however, a vague belief that injury to a snake in the village may in some cases harm a possessed person, an interesting belief in view of the fact that there is so little trace in Lovedu religion of the Zulu idea that ancestral spirits manifest themselves in snakes.

There is a special relationship between a possessed person and the doctor who initiated him: every year when the medicine needs renewal, beer or *mavula* cider is prepared, the doctor, who comes with a number of disciples and attendants, is called and there is a great dance of the possessed often lasting several days. This is 'dancing for medicine' (*ho rimela tshidi*). Some possessed people have to be specially doctored before drinking the first *mavula* cider and the *mavula* season is always a time of *lelopo* gatherings; others are required to contribute corn at harvest time for a large *lelopo* dance at the home of the doctor. These gatherings, at which a goat may be slaughtered in addition to the cider provided, add greatly to the prestige of the doctor. There is sometimes considerable jealousy between *malopo* doctors, who, with those initiated by them, may form rival schools. Some doctors refuse to allow their followers to dance with those initiated by other doctors without special permission. At one session, at which there had been some unpleasantness, the doctor smeared some powder into incisions on the neck, tongue, crown, and sides of the heads of her disciples. Then, taking some medicated water in her mouth, she squirted (*ho phasa*), saying, 'I "place" you. Don't you dance any more. I don't like dancing every day without my special permission. Any *lelopo* who dances where you are dancing will break her leg or be badly hurt.' The remainder of the water was given them to drink.

An interesting feature of the cult of possession is that many people when the spirit is upon them speak in a foreign tongue, said to be Thovhɔ or Kharanga. Investigation into this matter, however, shows that this is not as startling a phenomenon as it might appear. When possessed, a person for the most part sits silent unless he is a doctor. If he speaks at all, this is in monosyllables, for all his wants and messages are conveyed in song. *Lelopo* songs are stereotyped and known to many because the uninitiated have to join in the refrain when rattling the accompaniment. In these songs there is usually a number of foreign words, though many consist purely of meaningless sounds, such as '*Wɔ le wee ene ɔ wee wee wee wama wee*'. Often peculiarities in the pronunciation of vowels are interpreted as Thovhɔ. When the refrain begun (*ho rema*) by the possessed person has been taken up by the chorus, he continues with the song or interpolates his own words, usually Sotho with a few foreign words interspersed, till he wishes to stop. In this way he makes known his wishes. It quite frequently happens that no one understands the gibberish of the possessed person, and doctors generally have an attendant who interprets what they wish to convey. There are, however, numerous well-known words in general use by people when their spirit is upon them—for instance, *mafoto* or *moroto* for *lefɔla* (snuff), *hula* or *mvula* for *mantsi* (water), *va ga mbaya* for *va ga ntiya* (they may beat me), *haya* for *kae* (home). But many possessed people speak pure Sotho, and it is recognized that a newly initiated person may not

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

But the whole cycle of myths merely emphasises in very general terms the importance of rain-making as a prerequisite of the claim to chieftainship and for the well-being of the tribe; it does not concern itself with justifying the validity of the various institutional arrangements that are the main support of the beliefs and values of the queen's mystical credentials.

Conception of the Natural Order

The Lovedu do not oppose man and nature. There are no explicit formulations of the nature of the universe, but a natural order inexorably going its ordained way is implicitly rejected in their conceptions. The assumption is that cosmic forces are controllable and, in fact, controlled at every turn by man for his own benefit. Since nature is of interest and importance only so far as it is or can be used by society, there is no such conception as a world order unrelated to man's activities and desires. The order of nature is a controlled one. There are various ways in which man is able to use and control powers in nature—by *ungaga* (the evil aspect of which is *vuloi*), i.e. by the use of power concentrated in certain persons and objects; by appeal to the ancestor-gods upon whom are projected the powers that the child experiences in relation to its parents; through the mysteries of the *dzomo* which are associated with initiation and the fertility cult; and through the divinity of the queen whose concern it is to control nature in the interests of the tribe as a whole. This idea of the control of nature by the chief on behalf of the tribe is not unique; it is common among the Bantu tribes of South Africa. But the Lovedu emphasis is on the divine origin and special affinity with nature of the queen herself, whereas in tribes such as the Zulu and Tsonga, where the mystical relation of the chief to his people and his powers over nature have to be achieved by magical strengthening on his accession and to be renewed periodically, it is largely by means of the magic of the royal regalia that the chief is able to exercise control. Among all, including Lovedu, one of the most important factors in the powers and position of the chief is the fact that he is the living representative of the long line of royal ancestors (tribal gods). There is considerable overlapping of these four categories among the Lovedu. Thus ancestors are kept satisfied and happy by a charm placed in their shrine; the queen controls rain not only through her divinity but also by means of medicines and charms and appeals to her ancestors who can prevent her from making rain. Let us consider these means for the control of nature in greater detail.

Ungaga (skilled use of power concentrated in persons and objects)

The forces of nature may be manipulated through properties intrinsic in various objects, animate and inanimate. The substances in which these attributes or powers (*maagla*) reside are mainly *mulimo* (medicines) or *mere* (plants). But the term medicines in this context has a wider connotation than the parallel term among us; it includes both medicine and magic, and is a medico-magical conceptual category which to the Lovedu is quite distinct

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

from the supernatural. While anyone who knows a cure for an ailment is manipulating the forces of nature and using *vupuga*, there are doctors who, by virtue of long training, know many medicines, have learnt how to divine and have been imbued with additional perspicacity and powers as a result of a special initiation. Medicine functions by virtue of the properties, actual or ascribed, of matter; the principles underlying the operation of medicines assume mechanical cause and effect and even the divining bones are read according to rule.

There are, however, two types of doctor who fall into a different category: the *lelapo* doctor, directly possessed and guided by an ancestor spirit, who largely confines his activities to curing possessed people, and the *mugome* or 'smeller-out' who is generally a foreigner. People using the forces of nature for evil purposes are *vadzi* (witches and sorcerers) and are dealt with in another context. *Vupuga*, it will be seen, is the use of impersonal power inherent in matter, which is extracted by the expert (*pugo*) and applied in the interests of the health and well-being of men; it is also the exercise of personal qualities or skills, either inherited or acquired through spirit possession or guidance.

Ancestors

Ancestors can influence for good and evil the fortunes only of their own descendants, who in the case of the chief's ancestors are taken to include the whole tribe. Their control over the forces of nature is not explicitly formulated; and what is expressly stated is not always confirmed in Lovedu religious practices. The ancestors are clearly conceived to exercise an overall control. A man will always assert that no harm or illness can befall him if his ancestors are watchful enough, for they have power to ward off all evil and misfortune. It is said that even witches cannot, without the will of the ancestors, enter a village or deliver the last fatal blow that kills a man. But in practice the will of the ancestors either is not interposed, for no ascertainable reason, or is ineffective to ward off attacks. If some great sorrow overtakes a man, it is said that 'his ancestors have had an accident' implying that he has been temporarily deprived of their protection and is at the mercy of his enemies. Even medicines are said to be ineffective without the co-operation of one's ancestors, the conception being not merely that their goodwill is essential but also that *vupuga* belongs to the ancestors. In fact, however, the ineffectiveness of medicines is never in any concrete case attributed to the lack of such co-operation.

Ancestors are appealed to and thanked for good crops, fertility, plenty, and all manner of good fortune and success. The desire to be remembered and given tendance is attributed to them, and they may themselves cause harm and sickness to descendants who neglect them; but somewhat inconsistently a man may with impunity neglect them for many years and give them tendance only when misfortune overtakes him. Ancestors may be approached and propitiated or thanked by means of offerings and prayer

LOBEDU PROPERTY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

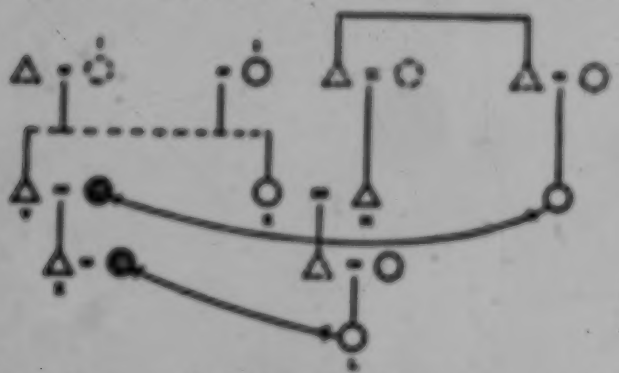

FIG. 3. An arranged marriage (Z to L) to 'knit together' the families of two affines.

growing apart (separating). Here is my son's daughter. Let us knit together the family (*ruka lolaka*) else soon we shall be lost to one another'. So Z, the son of V, married L, M's granddaughter. It is interesting to note that while M had married V's half-sister, V had also married a 'sister' of M (M's father's brother's daughter), a case of 'brother-sister' exchange which is very rare among the Lobedu. Z was thus marrying his mother's 'brother's' son's daughter, who was at the same time also his father's half-sister's son's daughter.

Marriage from generation to generation with the uterine brother's daughter has important consequences for ancestor worship. It leads to a merging of ancestors on the father's and mother's sides so that they become *malaka a matse*—one lineage, as the Lobedu phrase it, with identical ancestors in at least two of the four grandparents' families. If a diviner diagnoses an illness as due to someone in a man's father's mother's lineage (which in the case of two generations of mother's brother's daughter marriages will be the same as the mother's father's lineage), then a man's mother, or even his wife, could officiate in a beer-offering in his homestead to the ancestors concerned. The Lobedu call upon and give offerings on different occasions to all four grandparents and other deceased members of their lineages. It is interesting to note that the mother's mother who never becomes by virtue of preferential marriage an ancestor common to both sides of the family and might thus be in danger of being left out, makes herself very much felt in practice. She